

REMARKS

Status of the Application

Claims 1-4, 6-12, 14, 15 and 17-19 and 21-23 are all the claims pending in the Application. Claims 1, 12 and 17 are hereby amended in a clarifying, non-limiting, manner to provide correct antecedent basis.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for contacting Examiner's representatives via telephone¹ on January 6, 2004 to discuss the instant Application, and for his indication that the Application would be in condition for allowance if claims 1, 12 and 17 were amended in a clarifying manner. As claims 1, 12 and 17 are hereby amended as the Examiner has requested, Applicant believes that all of the claims of this Application are now allowable.

Specification

As the Examiner requested during the above-noted teleconference, the Specification is hereby amended to provide: (1) a more descriptive title; and (2) added descriptive language to provide "literal" antecedent basis for the independent claims.

Applicant notes that the Examiner agreed that various portions of the Application as filed clearly indicate that Applicant contemplated an embodiment wherein an axially inner groove edge of each lug groove is aligned on the central plane (see FIG. 1, pg. 10, lines 14-17 indicated by the Examiner during the teleconference, and pg. 11, lines 7-9 indicated by the Applicant in

¹ As the teleconference was initiated by the Examiner, Applicant believes that no separate statement of regarding the substance of the teleconference is necessary.

the December 8, 2003 Amendment). Accordingly, no "new matter" issues are raised by this added language.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-4, 6-12, 14, 15 and 17-19 and 21-23 are allowable. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the application now is in condition for allowance with all of the claims 1-4, 6-12, 14, 15 and 17-19 and 21-23.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees which may be required to maintain the pendency of this application, except for the Issue Fee, to our Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,



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